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Employer's Guide to Teen Worker Safety

<http://www.dol.gov/dol/opa/public/summer/employer.htm>



Employer's Guide to Teen Worker Safety

A Message from the Secretary of Labor

Dear Concerned Employer:

This summer more than 3 million teens will work at summer jobs. For the vast majority of teens, work will be a rewarding experience. Despite most employers' efforts to provide a safe workplace, a sizable number of teens will risk being injured or killed on the job.

Tragically, each year some 70 teens are killed while working and 200,000 are injured; 64,000 teens are injured seriously enough to require hospital emergency room treatment.

It may sound obvious, but teens are injured where they work. For example, 51 percent work in the retail industry, and more than 50 percent of teen occupational injuries occur in the retail industry.

Teens, like all new workers, need help to work safely. This guide is designed to give you basic information to better protect your teen workers and avoid workplace injuries. Thank you for your interest and concern for the nation's working teens.

Sincerely,



Robert B. Reich

Employer's Teen Safety Checklist

To be sure, some tasks and tools present more of a hazard than others. Many hazardous activities are limited or prohibited by the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA). But you can take some simple steps to help prevent injuries to working teens.

1. Understand and comply with child labor laws and occupational safety and health regulations that apply to your business. The Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) limits the hours minors under 16 can work and prohibits employing minors under age 18 for certain hazardous occupations.
2. Stress safety, particularly among first-line supervisors who have the greatest opportunity to influence teens and their work habits. Make sure that adolescent workers are appropriately trained and supervised to prevent injuries and hazardous exposures.
3. Work with supervisors and experienced workers to develop an injury and illness prevention program and to help identify and solve safety and health problems. Many injuries can be prevented through simple work redesign.
4. Assess and eliminate hazards for adolescent workers. The FLSA* prohibits assigning teens to tasks and tools that have accounted for a large number of injuries, like:
 - ☐ Driving a car or truck
 - ☐ Operating tractors or other heavy equipment
 - ☐ Using power tools
5. Train adolescent workers to recognize hazards and use safe work practices. This is especially important since teens may have had little work experience, and new workers are at a disproportionate risk of injury.

** For a full list of hazardous jobs prohibited under the FLSA, [click here](#).*

Preparing Teens to Work Safely

Teens need help to work safely. Their inexperience counts against them. In fact, workers with less than one-year's experience account for almost one-third of the occupational injuries every year. Take 4 steps to help prepare teens to work safely.

1. Double Check Tasks

Supervisors and co-workers can help compensate for inexperience by showing teens how to do the job correctly. What may be obvious to an adult or simple common sense to an experienced employee may not be so clear to a teen tackling a task for the first time. Time spent showing a teen the best way to handle a job will be paid back threefold through work done right and without harm to products or injury to the teen. Training teens to work safely is a multi-step process.

- ☐ Give them clear instructions and tell them what safety precautions to take.
- ☐ Ask them to repeat your instructions and give them an opportunity to ask questions.
- ☐ Show them how to perform the task.
- ☐ Then watch them while they do it, correcting any mistakes.
- ☐ Finally, ask if they have any additional questions.

Once young workers know what to do and have demonstrated that they can do the job right, check again later to be sure they are continuing to do the task correctly. Don't let them take short cuts with safety. Be sure, too, that supervisors and co-workers set a good example by following all the appropriate rules as well.

2. Show Them How to Use Safety Equipment

The Fair Labor Standards Act prohibits young workers from doing tasks identified as particularly hazardous, including operating heavy equipment, using meat slicing machines, working late at night, and using certain power tools.

This does not eliminate every hazard, however, and some teens may still need to wear protective equipment such as safety shoes, hard hats, or gloves, depending on the nature of their work. Be sure that teens know when they need to wear protective gear, where to find it, how to use it, and how to care for it.

In other cases, teens may simply need to know about safety features of equipment or facilities. For example, they may need to be aware that they must keep exit doors free from clutter, assure that safety guards remain on machinery or that equipment is turned off or disconnected at the end of each shift.

3. Prepare Teens for Emergencies

Every worker needs to be ready to handle an emergency. You should prepare your teens to escape a fire, handle potentially violent customers, deal with power outages--or face any other risks that affect your business. Teens also need to know whom to go to if an injury should occur and they need first aid or medical care.

4. Set Up A Safety and Health Program

A strong safety and health program involving every worker at your business is your best defense against workplace injuries. For help in establishing or improving a safety and health program, [click here](#).

A Quick Look at the Fair Labor Standards Act

The FLSA child labor provisions are designed to protect minors by restricting the types of jobs and the number of hours they may work.

Prohibited jobs

Seventeen hazardous non-farm jobs, as determined by the Secretary of Labor, are out of bounds for teens below the age of 18. They may not work at jobs that involve:

1. Manufacturing or storing explosives
2. Driving a motor vehicle and being an outside helper on a motor vehicle
3. Coal mining
4. Logging and sawmilling
5. Power-driven wood-working machines*
6. Exposure to radioactive substances and to ionizing radiations
7. Power-driven hoisting equipment
8. Power-driven metal-forming, punching, and shearing machines*
9. Mining, other than coal mining
10. Meat packing or processing (including power-driven meat slicing machines).
11. Power-driven bakery machines
12. Power-driven paper-products machines*
13. Manufacturing brick, tile, and related products
14. Power-driven circular saws, band saws, and guillotine shears*
15. Wrecking, demolition, and ship-breaking operations
16. Roofing operations*
17. Excavation operations*

** Limited exemptions are provided for apprentices and student-learners under specified standards.*

Hours limitations

1. Youths 18 or older may perform any job, whether hazardous or not, for unlimited hours, in accordance with minimum wage and overtime requirements.
2. Youths 16 and 17 years old may perform any nonhazardous job, for unlimited hours.
3. Youths 14 and 15 years old may work outside school hours in various nonmanufacturing, nonmining, nonhazardous jobs up to
 - ☐ 3 hours on a school day
 - ☐ 18 hours in a school week
 - ☐ 8 hours on a non-school day
 - ☐ 40 hours on a non-school week

Also, work must be performed between the hours of 7 a.m. and 7 p.m., except from June 1 through Labor Day, when evening hours are extended to 9 p.m.

For answers to your questions about child labor, call your local Wage and Hour Division, U.S. Department of Labor ([click here](#)).

Ideas from Other Employers

Take advantage of others' experience. Here are some examples of safety practices that are being used successfully by employers across the country.

- ☐ Different-colored smocks are issued to employees under the age of 18 at a chain of Pennsylvania convenience stores. That way, supervisors know who isn't allowed to operate the electric meat slicer.

- ❑ An employer in the fast-food industry, with 8,000 young workers in five states, developed a computerized tracking system to ensure that teens under the age of 16 aren't scheduled for too many hours during school weeks.
- ❑ Teens are issued a laminated, pocket-sized "Minor Policy Card" on the first day of work at a Pennsylvania supermarket. The card explains the firm's policy and requirements for complying with child labor laws.
- ❑ One employer, with 31 pizza restaurants in Virginia, took the unusual step of posting signs offering a \$100 reward to workers under 18 who report that they have been asked to perform hazardous jobs.
- ❑ Many employers have taken the simple, but critical, step of training all their supervisors in the requirements of the Fair Labor Standards Act.

Resources to Tap

Child Labor Expertise

For information about teen safety in the workplace, contact the Employment Standards Administration, Wage and Hour Division. Ask for the Child Labor Contact.

Office Telephone

Philadelphia (215) 596-1185

Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Puerto Rico, Rhode Island, Vermont, Virgin Islands, Virginia, West Virginia

Atlanta (404) 347-4801

Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Kentucky, Tennessee

Chicago (312) 353-0563

Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, Wisconsin

Dallas (214) 767-6895, X 242

Arkansas, Colorado, Louisiana, Montana, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Texas, Utah, Wyoming

Kansas City (816) 426-5386

Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska

San Francisco (415) 975-4562

Alaska, Arizona, California, Hawaii, Idaho, Nevada, Oregon, Washington

OSHA Consultation Program Directory

For help in establishing or improving a safety and health program, small businesses can contact the OSHA consultation program in their state.

State Telephone

Alabama (205) 348-3033

Alaska (907) 269-4954
Arizona (602) 542-5795
Arkansas (501) 682-4522
California (415) 972-8515
Colorado (970) 491-6151
Connecticut (860) 566-4550
Delaware (302) 577-3908
District of Columbia (202) 576-6339
Florida (904) 488-3044
Georgia (404) 894-2643
Guam (671) 475-0136
Hawaii (808) 586-9100
Idaho (208) 385-3283
Illinois (312) 814-2337
Indiana (317) 232-2688
Iowa (515) 281-5352
Kansas (913) 296-7476
Kentucky (502) 564-6896
Louisiana (504) 342-9601
Maine (207) 624-6460
Maryland (410) 333-4210
Massachusetts (617) 969-7177
Michigan **(H)** (517) 332-8250
(S) (517) 322-1809
Minnesota (612) 297-5433
Mississippi (601) 987-3981
Missouri (314) 751-3403
Montana (406) 444-6418

Nebraska (402) 471-4717
Nevada (702) 486-5016
New Hampshire (603) 271-2024
New Jersey (609) 292-3923
New Mexico (505) 827-2877
New York (518) 457-2481
North Carolina (919) 662-4644
North Dakota (701) 328-5188
Ohio (614) 644-2246
Oklahoma (405) 528-1500
Oregon (503) 378-3272
Pennsylvania (412) 357-2561
Puerto Rico (809) 754-2188
Rhode Island (401) 277-2438
South Carolina (803) 734-9599
South Dakota (605) 688-4101
Tennessee (615) 741-7036
Texas (512) 440-3834
Utah (801) 530-6868
Vermont (802) 828-2765
Virginia (804) 786-6613
Virgin Islands (809) 772-1315
Washington (360) 902-5443
West Virginia (304) 558-7890
Wisconsin (H) (608) 266-8579
(S) (414) 521-5188
Wyoming (307) 777-7786
(H) - Health (S) - Safety

Work Safe This Summer Partners

The Department of Labor wishes to thank its partners in the effort to "Work Safe This Summer," and beyond.

National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health

NIOSH, a branch of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, coordinates research and makes recommendations for preventing work-related illnesses and injuries. NIOSH has published an Alert on *Preventing Deaths and Injuries of Adolescent Workers*. For a free copy of this or for a publications list, call 1 (800) 356-4674.

American Academy of Pediatrics

The American Academy of Pediatrics is an organization of 50,000 pediatricians dedicated to the health, safety, and well-being of infants, children, adolescents, and young adults.

National Consumers League

Founded in 1899, NCL is the nation's pioneer consumer group which works to bring consumer power to bear on marketplace and workplace issues. NCL worked for child labor provisions in the Fair Labor Standards Act (passed in 1938) and more recently, has helped organize the Child Labor Coalition which is committed to ending child labor exploitation in the U.S. and abroad.

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[DOL Home Page](#)



[Top of Document](#)



[Top of List](#)